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**DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT**

**CITY OF NEWTON  
Massachusetts**

**INTER-OFFICE CORRESPONDENCE**

**DATE:** August 19, 2010

**TO:** John Lojek, Commissioner of Inspectional Services

**FROM:** Candace Havens, Interim Director Planning and Development  
Derek Valentine, Senior Planner

**SUBJECT:** **Administrative Site Plan Review – Sec. 30-5(a)(2)**  
**Lasell College, Hamel House Renovation**

**CC:** Mayor Setti D. Warren  
Ward 4 Alderman Jay W. Harney  
Alderman at Large Leonard J. Gentile  
Alderman at Large Amy Mah Sangiolo  
Tom Daley, Commissioner of Public Works  
John Daghlion, Associate City Engineer  
Assistant Chief Bruce A. Proia, Fire Department

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In accordance with Section 30-5(a)(2) of the City's Zoning Ordinance, which requires Site Plan Review for nonprofit educational uses, the Planning Department and other city departments have reviewed the proposed plans for the LASELL COLLEGE, HAMEL HOUSE, 221 WOODLAND ROAD (hereafter; "the site") submitted to the City of Newton on June 8, 2010. The proposed project is located on two contiguous parcels of land ( Sect. 43, Block 37, lots 7&8) bounded on the north by Woodland Road, on the west by Vista Avenue, on the south by a private residence at 20 Vista Avenue and on the east by other property of Lasell College (the College). The two properties across Vista Avenue from the site are also owned by the College. The College is proposing the renovation of the existing President's Residence on the site to accommodate the Admissions Office to be relocated from its current location in Irwin Hall on Cheswick Road. The project also includes the addition of a parking lot and enhancement of the landscaping on the site. The Planning Department held a neighborhood meeting to discuss the project on Tuesday July 20, 2010.

### **Project Overview**

Both parcels are in the SR-1 Residential Zoning District. The lot closest to Vista Avenue is 32,053 square feet and houses the 2.5 story wood frame President's House (Hamel House). It is in the Colonial Revival Style and was constructed in 1892. Many of the original details remain in tact. The structure is on the National Register of Historic Places and is located in the Auburndale Historic District near the Village of Auburndale. The adjacent parcel included in this project is also owned by the College and encompasses 20,849 square feet. It is currently vacant, open lawn.

In the existing basement of the house will be offices and storage. The College is proposing to leave the ground floor of the house mostly as is, but will renovate the kitchen in the rear to accommodate offices. The second floor is currently bedrooms and will be renovated to house additional offices. More offices will be located on the third floor which is currently attic space.

An additional dormer is proposed for the east façade to match the two existing dormers on this roof line. An elevator override dormer will be located on the east façade projecting above the existing ridgeline. New windows and copper downspouts will be added in addition to accessibility features and new exterior decking. The Auburndale Historic District Commission has reviewed all exterior changes and has issued a Certificate of Appropriateness.

A 12-space parking lot will be added to the southwest corner of the lot with the existing residence and would continue onto the adjacent vacant parcel. The parking lot would be accessed by the current drive off of Vista Avenue. Ten trees will be relocated elsewhere on the site to accommodate the new parking lot. No trees will be removed without being replaced or relocated. The landscaping would be enhanced and new pre-cast paver walkways added. A handicapped access ramp will be added along the east façade of the building.

### **Background**

Lasell College, a nonprofit educational institution in the Auburndale part of Newton has operated at this locus for approximately 150 years and has expanded its facilities over time. This proposed building retrofit is the latest in a series of renovations and new buildings on the Lasell Campus, including two new dorms on Studio Road (approved under the Administrative Site Plan Review Process in 2008,) new signage, and Forest Hall and Rockwell Hall Dormitories (approved in 1999 and 2006 respectively, again, through the City's Administrative Site Plan Review Process). In 2009, the College went through the Administrative Review Process for 45 Myrtle Avenue in which they demolished an existing barn and built a new structure on its footprint to be connected with a rehabilitated former residential building. This project is in progress and will result in a 19,000 square foot facility to house the College's Fashion Design Department.

### **Technical Considerations**

In accordance with Section 30-5 of the City's Zoning Ordinance, the plans are to be reviewed for compliance with the dimensional standards laid out in Section 30-15 Table 2 for a Multi-Use Institution and with parking regulations contained in Section 30-19. In addition, the Director of Planning and Development may consider the application in light of the *Site Plan Review Criteria* listed in Section 30-5(2)(c).

Zoning Chart			
221 Woodland Road-Newton, MA			
Zone: SR-1 Old			
Regulation	Required	Existing	Proposed
Lot Area	50,000s.f.	52,948s.f.	N/C
Front Setback	60'	51.2'	60.4'
Rear Setback	40'	66.8'	60.4'
Side Setback	40'	69.5/132.7	N/C
Lot Coverage	30%	5.40%	N/C
Open Space	30%	88.1%`	78.20%

The project is in compliance with all dimensional requirements. The Planning Department has no further recommendations on this.

### **II. COMPLIANCE WITH SECTION 30-19**

The proposal is for the addition of a 12-space parking lot. Since this project involves the relocation of existing staff, the Planning Department believes that the parking provided is sufficient. In accordance with Newton City Ordinances Section 30-19 (h)(2)(c), one handicap stall will be provided. In response to concerns from neighbors, the parking lot will only be used for visitors/prospective students. Staff will park off-site and no student parking will be allowed at 221 Woodland Road. There will be limited signage in the parking lot to respect the character of the Auburndale Historic District. Parking restrictions will be policed internally by campus security. No special event parking is planned at the site at this time.

#### **Site Lighting**

In accordance with Section 30-19 (j)(1), the proposed parking lot will have minimal security lighting. One architectural lighting fixture will be placed on the south and west sides of the proposed parking lot. A photometric study has been submitted as part of the

application. This study indicates that the lighting will maintain a minimum intensity of one-foot candle on the entire surface of the at-grade parking facility. The lights will be directed and shielded so as not to interfere with neighboring properties or adjacent streets as per Section 30-19 (j)(1)(b). The lighting will also be turned off at the end of business hours so as not to negatively impact the abutters.

### Landscaping

Section 30-19 (i)(1) of the Newton City Ordinances requires that parking lots of 5 or more spaces be suitably screened from adjacent properties and streets. A four foot tall solid fence will be placed on the side of the parking lot which faces Woodland Road. Pre-cast paver access ways will be added from the front door of the building to Woodland Road and would continue around the side of the building to the parking lot in the rear. Landscaping appears adequate to screen the parking areas from adjacent residences and streets.

## **III. AUBURNDALE HISTORIC DISTRICT**

The Auburndale Historic District Commission reviewed the proposal for consistency with their guidelines and issued a Certificate of Appropriateness for the changes at their June 8, 2010 meeting.

## **IV. SITE PLAN REVIEW CRITERIA**

As per Section 30-5 of the Zoning Ordinance, the Director of Planning and Development may consider this project in light of the following criteria:

### 1. Convenience and safety of vehicular and pedestrian movement within the site and in relation to the adjacent streets, properties or improvements

The proposed parking lot would be accessed by the existing drive off of Vista Avenue. The driveway is proposed to be 19' wide. No bike parking is required under Newton City Ordinances, but the Planning Department requests that some be provided. The Newton Fire Department has reviewed the plans for accessibility and water and approved all improvements on site. The Engineering Department advises that the applicant seek Street Opening and Sidewalk Crossing permits prior to modification of the access drive.

### 2. Provision of off-street loading incidental to the servicing of the building

No loading area was specified on the plans and none is required under 30-19 (l).

### 3. Screening of parking areas and structures

Eight 2-3 caliper dogwood trees (*Cornus sp.*) will be placed in two rows in front of this fence. Another group of eight dogwoods will be planted in 2 rows to screen the access drive from view of motorists and pedestrians on Woodland Road. Existing dense

evergreen coverage would remain near the rear property line and would shield the proposed parking area from the adjacent private residence. The existing evergreens at the rear of the site would be supplemented by transplanted plant material from elsewhere on the site. Four street trees will be added to supplement existing vegetation along Woodland Road and Vista Avenue. Several trees will be transplanted from the open lawn area and used as additional screening around the new parking lot. In accordance with Section 20-35(a)(3) of the City's Zoning Ordinances, transplanted trees shall be considered "replacement trees" and should be guaranteed for a period of one year. In the event that a transplanted tree dies, it should be replaced with one of similar variety and caliper. Care should be used in avoiding the disruption of the drip line of existing trees. Compliance with the Newton Tree Preservation Ordinance, 20-35 is expected. The College should submit a Tree Preservation Plan as part of their Construction Management Plan.

4. Provision of Utilities, adequacy for the methods for disposal of sewage, refuse and waste, and location of utility service lines underground

No dumpster is shown on the plans. The applicant should indicate how refuse will be removed from the property. New water service will be brought in from off of Woodland Road and a new sewer main will be brought in from Vista Avenue. All storm water shall be managed onsite. In accordance with a report from the Engineering Department prior to the issuance of a building permit, the applicant should perform a drainage analysis to demonstrate how any increased surface water will be infiltrated onsite. If practicable, any new utility service lines shall be located underground.

5. Site and relationship to nearby structures

The site is located amongst other properties of Lasell College. They are within the Auburndale Historic District. To the east of the site is a 2.5 story wood frame Queen Anne structure built in 1884 and currently used by the College. Across Woodland Road from the site at 230 Woodland Road is a 1920's brick Colonial Revival single-family home. To the west of the Colonial Revival at 220 Woodland Rd (also across from the site), is a four story brick structure which houses other facilities of the College. To the south of the site is a 2.5 story single-family residential structure built in 1865.

Overall, the area is one of late 19<sup>th</sup> century single-family/institutional buildings on lots of around 20,000 square feet. Since the College is proposing minimal changes to the exterior of the building, this proposal will have few impacts on the surrounding neighborhood.

6. Avoidance of Topographical Changes

The College is proposing minor changes to the topography of the site. The existing rolling lawn in front of the building will remain and some slight grade changes will accompany the installation of the parking area at the rear of the site.

**V. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMENDATIONS**

With your agreement, prior to the issuance of a building permit, Lasell College should be expected to complete the following:

- *The applicant should consider all recommendations in the Engineering Report dated June 30, 2010*
- *A dumpster or method for refuse disposal should be shown on the site plan with adequate screening.*
- *Although no bike parking is required under Newton City Ordinances, the Planning Department recommends the provision of some bike parking in light of the fact that no employee parking will be allowed on the site.*
- *Any proposed signage shall be reviewed by the Urban Design Commission prior to installation.*
- *The College should submit the Construction Management Plan for review and approval by the Planning Department, Inspectional Services Department and the Engineering Department.*
- *Regular communication with the Lasell Neighborhood Council is encouraged.*

**ATTACHMENTS:**

Attachment A- Land Use Map

Attachment B- Zoning Map

Attachment C- Memorandum from the City Engineering Department

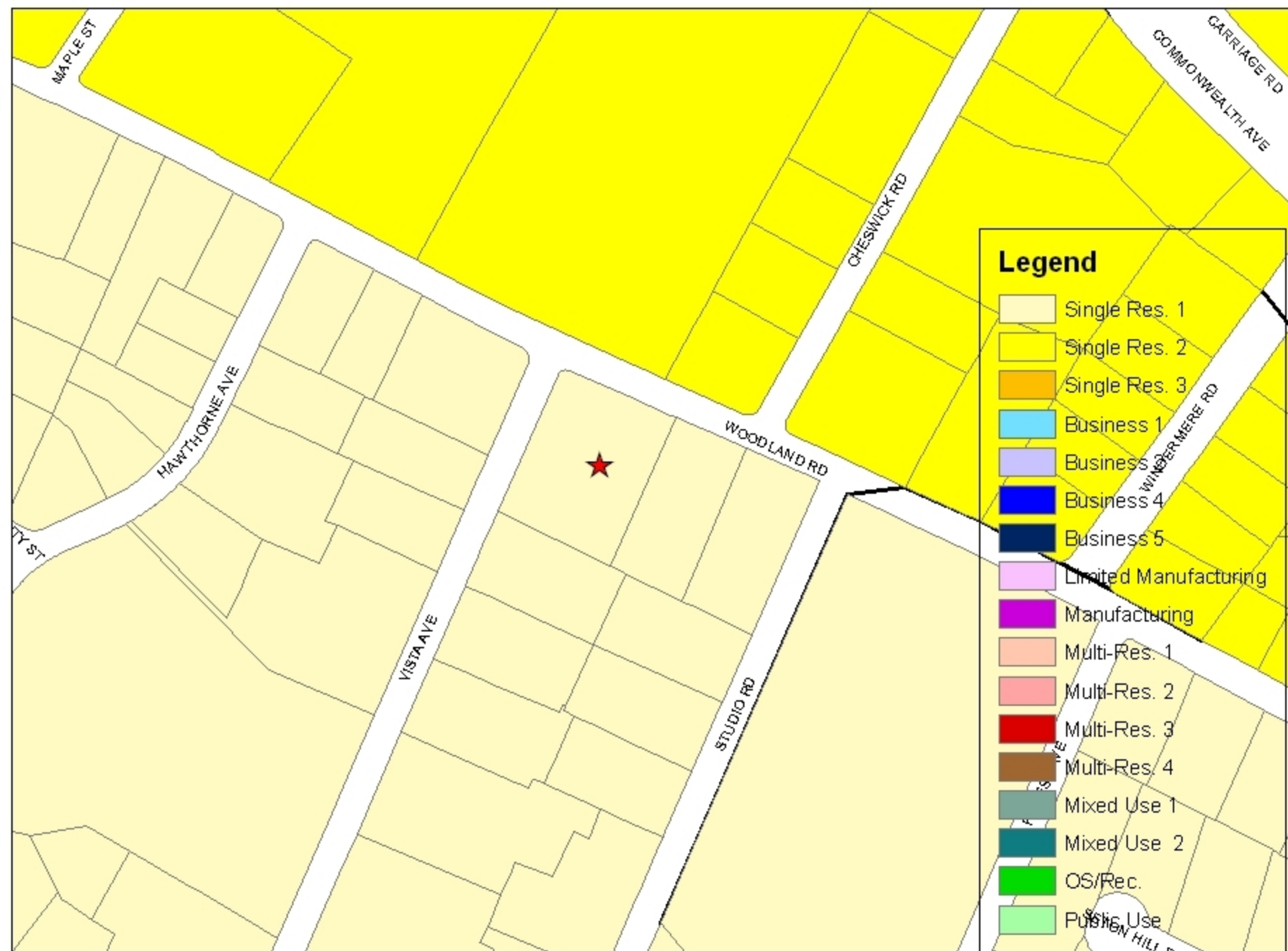
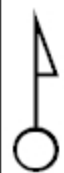
**MATERIALS REVIEWED:**

- *Parking Plan by VTP Associates, dated May 4, 2010*
- *Proposed Landscape Plan (L1), by Site Creative dated May 5, 2010*
- *Illustrative Perspective (L2), by Site Creative dated April 5, 2010*
- *Existing Floor Plans and Demolition (A1), signed and stamped by Paul W. MacNeely dated May 28, 2010*
- *Proposed Renovated Floor Plans (A2), signed and stamped by Paul W. MacNeely dated May 28, 2010*
- *Existing Exterior Elevations (A3), signed and stamped by Paul W. MacNeely dated May 28, 2010*
- *Proposed Renovated Exterior Elevations (A4), signed and stamped by Paul W. MacNeely dated May 28, 2010*
- *Lasell College Revised Small Parking Area Photometric Study, dated May 21, 2010*

## Vicinity of 221 Woodland Land Use



# 221 Woodland Vicinity Zoning Map



0 150 300 600 Feet



**CITY OF NEWTON**  
**ENGINEERING DIVISION**

**MEMORANDUM**

To: Candace Havens, Acting Director of Planning, (via email)

From: John Daghljan, Associate City Engineer

Re: Administrative Site Plan Review – 221 Woodland Road Lasell College

Date: June 30, 2010

CC: Lou Taverna, P.E., City Engineer (via email)  
Linda Finucane, Associate City Clerk (via email)  
Alexandra Ananth, Planner (via email)

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In reference to the above site, I have the following comments for a plan entitled:

*Renovation of Lasell College  
Hamel House  
221 Woodland Road  
Prepared By: VTP Associates, Inc.  
Dated: May 28, 2010*

Drainage:

1. An on site soil evaluation needs to be performed to obtain the seasonal high groundwater elevation, percolation rate in accordance to Title V. This information must be submitted for review. The locations of these tests need to be shown on the site plan. Test pits and percolation tests are required within 20-feet of each system; the plans need to clearly identify these test locations.
2. A drainage analysis needs to be performed based on the City of Newton's 100-year storm event of 6.5-inches over a 24-hour period. All runoff from increased impervious areas need to be infiltrated on site.
3. An Operations and Maintenance (O&M) plan for Stormwater Management Facilities is needed for the proposed system. The O&M must be recorded at the Middlesex Registry of Deeds. A copy of the recording instrument shall be submitted to the Engineering Division. Annual Inspection reports shall be submitted to the Commissioner of Public Works.

4. It is imperative to note that the ownership, operation, and maintenance of the proposed drainage system and all apparentness including but not limited to the drywells, catch basins, and pipes are the sole responsibility of the applicant.

Water & Sewer:

- It appears that more than 50% of the building is being demolished and renovated therefore; the water and sewer services must be updated, they were installed in 1894.

General:

1. As of January 1, 2009, all trench excavation contractors shall comply with Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 82A, Trench Excavation Safety Requirements, to protect the general public from unauthorized access to unattended trenches. Trench Excavation Permit required. This applies to all trenches on public and private property.
2. All tree removal shall comply with the City's Tree Ordinance.
3. The contractor is responsible for contacting the Engineering Division and scheduling an appointment 48 hours prior to the date when the utilities will be made available for an inspection of drainage system installation. The utility is question shall be fully exposed for the inspector to view; backfilling shall only take place when the City's Inspector has given their approval.
4. The applicant will have to apply for Street Opening, Sidewalk Crossing permits with the Department of Public Works prior to any construction.
5. The applicant will have to apply for a Building Permits with the Department of Inspectional Service prior to any construction.
6. Prior to Occupancy permit being issued, an As-Built Plan shall be submitted to the Engineering Division in both digital format and in hard copy. The plan should show all utilities and final grades, any easements and final grading.
7. If a Certificate of Occupancy is requested prior to all site work being completed, the applicant will be required to post a Certified Bank Check in the amount to cover the remaining work. The City Engineer shall determine the value of the uncompleted work.

Note: If the plans are updated it is the responsibility of the Applicant to provide all City Departments [Conservation Commission, ISD, and Engineering] involved in the permitting and approval process with complete and consistent plans.

If you have any questions or concerns please feel free to contact me @ 617-796-1023.